

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A SERIAL STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP."

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IX. FOR ONCE GERTRUDE TAKES THE LEAD.

THE lives of the two girls at Lady Caroline's were so completely happy, that they were induced to doubt whether they had ever really lived before. The difference between their racketty, disorderly, Bohemian existence while their father was alive, the pinched and poverty-stricken home which they shared with their mother until her death, and the refined comforts and luxuries which awaited them at their uncle's, was, of course, very great. But they were too young to feel it at the time, and they had come to look upon Woolgreaves as their home, and until Marian Ashurst entered upon it as its mistress, as an epitome of everything that was charming. Lady Caroline's house was much smaller than Woolgreaves; her income, probably, was nothing like their uncle's; and yet about her house and her servants, her carriage, and everything she had, there was a stamp of refinement and of good taste, springing from high breeding, such as they had never witnessed, even under Mrs. Creswell's régime; and whatever other fault the girls found with Mrs. Creswell, they invariably allowed her the possession of good taste. And Lady Caroline herself was so different, so immeasurably superior to any woman they had ever seen. With the exception of Lady Churchill, they had known no one save the village people and the wives of the principal manufacturers at Brocksopp, who had been daughters of other principal manufacturers at Shuttleworth and Comberingham, and might have been made in

one mould, or punched out of one piece; and Lady Churchill was a stupid old woman in a brown front, who, as Gertrude knew, said "obleege," and "apurn" for apron, and "knōw-ledge," and nearly drove you mad by the way in which she stared at you and rubbed her nose with a knitting-needle, while you were attempting to find conversation for her. But, in the girls' eyes, Lady Caroline was perfection; and it would have been indeed odd had they not thought her so, as, for reasons best known to herself, she went in more determinedly to make herself agreeable to them than she had done to any one for some years previous.

One reason was that she liked the girls, and was agreeably disappointed in them; she had expected to find them provincial parvenues, thrown upon her by their quarrel with a person of similar position and disposition with themselves, and had found them quiet lady-like young women, unpretentious, unobtrusive, and thoroughly grateful to her for the home which she had offered them in their time of need. From the step which she had taken so chivalrously Lady Caroline never shrank, but she told the girls plainly, in the presence of Mr. Joyce, that she thought it highly desirable that the fact of their being there as her guests should be officially made known to Mr. Creswell, to whom every consideration was due. As to Mrs. Creswell, there was no necessity to acknowledge her in the matter; but Mr. Creswell was not merely their nearest blood relation, but, until adverse influences had been brought to bear upon him, he had proved himself their most excellent friend, and even at the last, so far as Lady Caroline could gather from Gertrude, had made some feeble kind of fight against their leaving

his house. Mr. Joyce and the girls themselves were also of this opinion, Gertrude jumping at the prospect of any reconciliation with "dear old uncle," but avowing her determination to have nothing more to do with "that horrid madam;" and it was on Maud's suggestion, backed by Walter, that the services of Mr. Gould were employed for mediatory purposes. This was just before the election, and Mr. Gould declared it was utterly impossible for him to attend to anything that did not relate to blue and yellow topics; but a little later he wrote a very kind letter, announcing Mr. Creswell's illness, and deploring the strict necessity for keeping from the old gentleman any subjects of an exciting nature.

The corroboration of this bad news was brought to the little household in Chesterfield-street by Mr. Benthall, who, about that time, ran up to London for a week, and, it is needless to say, lost very little time in presenting himself to Miss Gertrude. The relations between the Helmingham schoolmaster and Gertrude Creswell were, of course, perfectly well known to Lady Caroline through Walter Joyce; who had explained to her ladyship that the causeless exclusion of Mr. Benthall from Woolgreaves had been the means of bringing about the final domestic catastrophe, and had led more immediately than anything else to the departure of the young ladies from their uncle's house. So that Lady Caroline was predisposed in the clergyman's favour, and the predisposition was by no means decreased when she made his acquaintance, and found him to be one of the Shropshire Benthalls, people of excellent family (a fact which always has immense weight with other people who can make the same boast), and essentially a man of the world and of society. A girl like Gertrude Creswell, who, charming though she was, was clearly nobody, might think herself lucky in getting a man of family to marry her. Of course Mrs. Creswell could not understand that kind of thing, and took a mere pounds-shillings-and-pence view of the question; but Mrs. Creswell had no real dominion over her husband's nieces, and as that husband was now too ill to be appealed to, and the girls were staying under her chaperonage, she should, in the exercise of her discretion, give Mr. Benthall full opportunity for seeing as much of Gertrude as he chose.

Lady Caroline did not come to this determination without consulting Walter Joyce, and Walter did not express his

opinion without consulting Maud Creswell, of whose clear head and calm common sense he had conceived a high opinion. The joint decision being favourable, Mr. Benthall had a very happy holiday in London, finding, if such a thing were possible, his regard for Gertrude increased by the scarcely hidden admiration which the bright complexion, pretty hair, and trim figure of the country-girl evoked from the passers-by in the public places to which he escorted her. Indeed, so completely changed by an honest passion for an honest girl, was this, at one time, selfish and calculating man of the world, that he was most anxious to marry Gertrude at once, without any question of settlement or reference to her uncle; declaring that, however Mrs. Creswell might now choose to sneer at it, the school income had maintained a gentleman and his wife before, and could be made to do so again. Mr. Benthall spoke with such earnestness that Joyce conceived a much higher opinion of him than he had hitherto entertained, and would have counselled Lady Caroline to lend her aid to the accomplishment of the schoolmaster's wish, had it not been for Maud, who pointed out that in such a case a reference was undoubtedly due to their uncle, no matter what might be his supposed state of health. If he were really too ill to have the matter submitted to him, and an answer—which, of course, would be unfavourable—were to be received from Mrs. Creswell, they might then act on their own responsibility; with the feeling that they had done their duty towards the old gentleman, and without the smallest care as to what his wife might say. This view of Maud's, expressed to Joyce with much diffidence, at once convinced him of its soundness, and a little conversation with those most interested, showed them the wisdom of adopting it. Mr. Benthall wrote a straightforward manly letter to Mr. Creswell, asking consent to his marriage with Gertrude. The day after its despatch, Maud the impassible, who was reading the Times, gave a suppressed shriek, and let the paper fall to the ground. Joyce, who was sitting close by talking to Lady Caroline, picked it up, and read in it the announcement of Mr. Creswell's death.

Of course this news caused an indefinite postponement of the marriage. The two girls grieved with deep and heartfelt sorrow for the loss of the kind old man. All little differences of the past few months were forgotten. Marian had no part in their

thoughts, which were all of the early days, when, two miserable little orphans, they were received at Woolgreaves, at once put into the position of daughters of the house, and where their every wish was studied and gratified. Gertrude's grief was especially violent, and she raved against the hard fate which had separated them from their uncle at a time when they would have so much wished to have been near him to minister to and nurse him. Evidence soon came that Mr. Creswell's sense of what was honourable and right had prevented him from allowing any recent events to influence his intentions towards his nieces. In his will they were mentioned as "my dearly loved Maud and Gertrude, daughters of my deceased brother Thomas, who have been to me as my own daughters during the greater part of their lives;" and to each of them was left the sum of ten thousand pounds on their coming of age or marriage. There were a few legacies to old servants and local charities, five hundred pounds each to Dr. Osborne and Mr. Teesdale, his two executors, and "all the rest of my property, real and personal, of every kind whatsoever, to my beloved wife Marian."

"And my beloved wife Marian will have about fifteen thousand a-year, as near as I can fix it," said Mr. Teesdale, as he left Woolgreaves, after the reading of the will; "and if the railway people take that twenty acres off that infernal Jack Ramsay's farm, about a couple of thou' more!"

It was not to be supposed that Mr. Benthall professed himself indifferent to the splendid legacy which Gertrude had inherited. As he had been willing and anxious to take her for herself, and to share what he had with her, so he was very much pleased to find that their future would be rendered considerably less anxious, and more comfortable than they had anticipated, and in his honest open-hearted way he did not scruple to say so. The death of their uncle did not make any difference in the course of the girls' lives. They still remained with Lady Caroline, whose regard for them seemed to increase daily, and it was understood that they would continue to inhabit Chesterfield-street until Gertrude was married, and that after that event Maud would frequently return there, making it her London home, and visiting it whenever she was not staying with her sister. So at least Lady Caroline proposed, and begged Mr. Benthall to make the suggestion to

Maud at the first convenient opportunity. The opportunity occurred very shortly, and arose from Maud's saying, when they were sitting together one morning,

"I saw Mr. Joyce yesterday, George, and took occasion to ask his advice on that matter."

"And what might that matter be, Maud? There are so many matters of importance on just now, that you must be more definite."

"It is well Gertrude is not here to hear you! In your present condition there should be only one matter of any importance to you, and that of course is——"

"Our marriage—to be sure! Well, you asked Joyce—what a wonderful fellow he is, by the way; his parliamentary business does not seem the least to have interfered with his writing, and with it all he seems to find time to come up here two or three times a week."

"He has the highest regard for Lady Caroline, and the greatest respect for her judgment," said Maud.

"Naturally, so have we all;" said Mr. Benthall, with a gradually spreading smile.

"Yes, but Mr. Joyce consults her in—how ridiculous you are, George! you're always saying stupid things and forgetting your subject. What were we talking about?"

"I like that; and you talk about forgetfulness! You were saying that you had spoken to Mr. Joyce about my marriage, though why you should have——"

"Don't be tiresome, you know what I mean! He perfectly agrees with you in thinking there is no necessity for postponing the marriage any further. Poor uncle has now been dead three months, and you have no necessity to consider whether Mrs. Creswell might think it too soon after that event or not!"

"We have no reason to be bound by what she would say, but I think it would be only right in Gertrude to write and tell her that the wedding is about to take place."

"That you and Gertrude must settle between you. For my part, I should not think of—— However, I confess my judgment is not to be relied on when that person is in question." Then she added in a low voice, and more as if speaking to herself, "How strange it will seem to be away from Gerty!"

Benthall heard the remark, and he took Maud's hand as he said, "But you won't be away from her, dear Maud! We have all of us talked over your future, and

Gertrude and I hope you will make your home with us, though Lady Caroline insists on claiming you for some portion of the year."

"You are all of you very good, George," said Maud; "you know how much I should love to be with you and Gerty, and what gratitude and affection I have for Lady Caroline. But I don't think the life you have proposed would exactly suit me."

"Not suit you, Maud?" cried Mr. Benthall, in astonishment; "why, what would you propose to do?"

"I cannot say exactly, though I have some ideas about it which I can't clearly express. You see I shall never be married, George, don't laugh at me, please, I'm speaking quite seriously, and there is this large sum of money which uncle left me, and which I don't think should be either squandered away or left lying idle!"

"Why, my dear, what on earth do you propose to do with the money?" asked practical Mr. Benthall.

"To put it to some good use, I hope; to use it and my own time and services in doing good, in benefiting those who need it——"

"You're not going to give it to the missionaries, or any rubbish of that kind, I trust," interrupted Mr. Benthall. "Look here, Maud, depend upon it—oh! here's her ladyship, don't say a word about it before her. Good morning, Lady Caroline! This young lady and I have been discussing the propriety of writing to Mrs. Creswell announcing Gertrude's approaching marriage."

"I don't think there can be a doubt as to the propriety of such a course," said Lady Caroline. "Of course, whatever she might say about it would not make the slightest difference to us."

"Of course not."

"But I don't think you need fear any disagreeables. Mrs. Creswell is in a very different position now to that which she held when she thought fit to behave badly to those young ladies, and their relations with her are also quite altered. And by all accounts she is quite sufficient woman of the world to understand and appreciate this."

Lady Caroline was right. In reply to Gertrude's letter announcing her marriage, came a most affectionate note from Marian to her "dearest Gertrude," congratulating her most heartily; complimenting her on her choice of a husband; delighting in the prospect of their living so near to her; hoping to see much of them; regretting

that her recent bereavement prevented her being present at the ceremony, or having it take place, as she should so much have wished, at Woolgreaves, and begging permission to send the enclosed, as her contribution to aid in the setting up of the new household; and the enclosure was a cheque for three hundred pounds.

Mr. Benthall winced a little when he saw the cheque, and Mr. Joyce gave a very grim smile when his friend informed him of the affair; but advised Mr. Benthall to pocket the money, which Mr. Benthall did. As has been said, he did not pretend to despise money; but he was essentially a gentleman in his notions as to the acceptance of favours. He had thought several times about that conversation with Maud, in which she had mentioned the manner in which she had wished to dispose of her fortune and her future. This had caused Mr. Benthall some uneasiness; he had no hankering after his future sister-in-law's fortune; there was nothing he would have liked so much as to see her happily married; but he did not like the idea of the money being foolishly invested in useless charity or gotten hold of by pseudo-philanthropists. A conversation which he had with Gertrude a few days before their marriage seemed, however, to do away with all his fears, and render him perfectly easy in his mind on this point. A short conversation which ended thus:

"And you're sure of it, Gerty?"

"Positive! I've thought so a long time—now I'm sure! And you must be a great goose, George, not to have noticed it yourself."

"I am not a great goose, and I certainly had some suspicions at one time; but—Well, now, that would be highly satisfactory."

"Do you think there is anything remaining from—from the other one, George?"

"From the other one? You mean from Mrs.—Not the remotest thought of her even."

"Well, then, it rests with him entirely. Wouldn't it be nice for them both?"

"It would, indeed; and for us too. Well, we'll see what can be done."

Enigmatical, but apparently satisfactory.

So George Benthall and Gertrude Creswell were married at St. James's Church in Piccadilly, by the Reverend John Bonstein, a High Church rector of a Worcestershire parish, and an old college chum of the bridegroom's. A very quiet wedding,

with Maud as the sole bridesmaid, and Joyce as best man, and Lady Caroline, and, oddly enough, Lord Hetherington, who had just come up to town from Westhope, and, calling at his sister's, had learned what was going to take place, and "thought he should like to see it, don't you know. Had never been at any wedding except his own, and didn't recollect much about that, except that—curious thing, never should forget it—when he went into the vestry to sign his name, or something of that kind, saw surplice hanging up behind the door, thought it was ghost, or something of that kind, give you his word!" So the little earl arrived the next morning at eleven at the church, and took his place in a pew near the altar, and propped his ear up with his hand to listen to the marriage service, at which he seemed to be much affected. When the ceremony was over, he joined the party in the vestry, insisted on bestowing a formal salute upon the bride, Lady Hetherington, he knew, was safely moored at Westhope, and, as some recompense for the infliction, he clasped on Gertrude's arm a very handsome bracelet, as his bridal gift.

Such a marriage promised to prove a happy one. In its early days, of course, everything was rose-coloured, those days when Maud went down to stay with George and Gertrude at the school, and when, a little later, Walter Joyce ran down for the Easter holidays to his old quarters. He was glad of the chance of seeing them once again, he said, and determined to avail himself of it; and then George Benthall looked in his face and smiled knowingly. Walter returned the grin, and added, "For it's a chance that may not happen to me again!" And when his friend looked rather blank at this, and asked him what he meant, Joyce laughed again, and finally told him that Lord Hetherington had just had a piece of patronage fall to his share, the rectory of Newmanton-by-Perrington, a lovely place in the Isle of Wight, where the stipend was not sufficiently large to allow a man with a large family to live on it, but the exact place for a parson with a little money of his own. And Lord Hetherington had inquired of Joyce whether his friend, that remarkably pleasant fellow—bless my soul, forget my own name next! him we saw married, don't you know?—whether he was not exactly the sort of fellow for this place, and would he like it? Walter thought that he was and he would; and Lord Hetherington, knowing Joyce was

going down to see his friend, bid him inquire, and if all were straight, assure Mr. Benthall that the living was his. And this was how Walter Joyce executed his commission, and this was how George Benthall heard this most acceptable news.

"By the way, what made you grin, Benthall, when I said I had come down here for my holiday to look at my old quarters?" asked Walter.

"Because I thought there might be yet another reason, which you had not stated! Anxiety to see some one here!"

"Anxiety is the wrong word. Strong wish to see you and your wife again, and——"

"My wife and I are out of the affair! Come, confess!"

"I give you my honour, I don't know what you mean!"

"Likely enough; but I'm older than you, and, parson though I am, I declare I think I've seen more of the world! Shall I tell you what brought you down here? I shall!—then I will!—to see Maud Creswell."

"Maud Creswell! What on earth should I—what—why—I mean—what, is Miss Creswell to me?"

"Simply the woman who thinks more about you than any other creature on earth. Simply the girl who is raving—head over ears in love with you. Don't pretend you don't know it. Natural instinct is too strong to allow any doubt upon that point."

"I swear you surprise me beyond belief! I swear that—— Do you mean this, Benthall?"

"As a gentleman and a Christian, I've told you what I believe; and as a man of the world I tell you what I think; whether wittingly or unwittingly, you are very far gone in returning the young lady's sentiments!"

"I—that is—there's no doubt she is a girl of very superior mind, and—by Jove, Benthall, you've given a most singular twist to my holiday!"

EASTERN PRODIGIES.

OF one Eastern city, in which I lived for some time, the Turks told me that at the creation of the world Allah provided three sacksful or bags of lies, and that he appropriated two of the three to that particular place, and one to all the rest of the world. I had strong reason to believe this legend.

What the Mussulmen want in inventive power, they make up for in capacity of belief. Numerous as are the cities on the surface, more numerous still (according to them) are the

cities beneath. The precise situation of most of these is unknown, but in one case it is known, and the entrance to it is visible; I have seen it, in fact.

This entrance is in the face of a mountain not many miles from the city of Ephesus. It is a flat niche, which looked to me as if some one had begun a small tunnel or drift-way, and then stopped. No doubt I must be wrong. If we could get the key of the door (and that is perhaps in the keeping of some African magician), we should find it readily swing on its hinges, and the population would stream forth. Their carriages and horses, however, they could not possibly bring with them, for the door (granting an invisible door) is too low. There, within that mountain, is a vast people in a large city, with all the establishments needful for such a concourse. They are within a few feet of us. I wonder how their streets and palaces are lighted? I have been over that mountain range, but I never could find a clue to this mystery.

It is enchanted ground, however. I remember once passing there on horseback; none but my own party in sight. High above in the air, we heard the ringing of bells and of cathedral chimes, like some carillon of Flanders! It came from no fixed station; but floated up and down in the air above us. There, we clearly heard it, awakening old thoughts of our western cities, when on some Sunday or holiday, or in the summer evening, the bells cheerily rang forth from the spires. I could see no one; but I have little doubt that this sound from the subterranean city was an echo of the bells of strings of camels moving in the distance.

The city is closed; but it may yet give forth its men. In holy Ephesus, near by, did not the seven sleepers take shelter in a cave, and did they not there remain for one hundred years, when they and their dog came out, and hardly found the way to their own neighbourhood, when, what they thought had been the hurried sleep of a night, had been the long epoch of revolutions in religion, and in the state? The street boys, who mocked at them, were their great grandchildren. Old men, to whom they appealed for information and protection, were their own grandsons. Their beards had turned grey, and their dog had become decrepit; as well he might at a time of life unknown to dogs before. The citizens of Ephesus could be little surprised to see men of past ages reappear, and treated them with honour; but the sleepers found none whom they knew, of wives, or infants, late or early friends. The seven sleepers went into a convent with their dog, and, after a further lease of mortal life, were buried in holiness in their own cave, in truthful commemoration of the event.

I heard of two aged men near Mekka, who were known to many Moslem pilgrims as being six hundred years old or more. Our own grandfathers lived when George the Third was king, not a hundred years ago; but one of these sheikhs might have seen a sheikh who by

like communication would have learnt from an eye-witness the events of two thousand years ago, when the memory of Alexander still was young, and before Julius fought for the empire of the East.

The British Association at its last meeting reduced by five thousand years the age of the Wellingtonia gigantea, and unlucky inquiries have also brought down the ages of the sheikhs. Those who had not been on the pilgrimage, fixed them at six hundred or eight hundred years; those who had been part of the way, said four hundred; I was afraid to inquire nearer, lest the old men should be reduced to boys, and I should lose the pleasure of the marvel.

I was told, however, by a learned Turk, that the truth of the matter was that a sheikh taking possession of the tent or abode of a famous sheikh, is known by that name, and that the ignorant multitude see in the perpetual succession of men of like name only one long-lived individual.

Often have aged and bowed men been pointed out to me as a hundred and fifty years old; but I could never get such an age proved. A Turk can always gain a few years in age by the shortness of the Turkish year.

A Turkish friend who had been in Roomelia told me that at a great fair in the Adrianople district he had seen an old Greek woman sitting at the foot of a tree, selling wares; her age, she said, was a hundred and fifty; but she pointed out her mother and grandmother, and said that her great-grandmother was at home in the village, being now too infirm to attend the fair. The old women got much custom, including some from my friend, but he did not go to the village to see the eldest of the family.

People so gifted as to tenure of life, are likewise privileged as to other faculties, ubiquity not excepted. There is now, or was lately, an imam in the city of Diarbekir, who on the same day, and within an hour's time, preached in the great mosques of Diarbekir and Aleppo, two or three hundred miles apart. This was attested by merchants and others, who had known him in both places. He likewise preached simultaneously in the cities of Mosul and Diarbekir.

An African friend—who made arithmetical mistakes in many matters of mine—told me some singular tales. He informed me of men and women in his part of the world who had three eyes each: and of another population having, besides the front eyes, two behind, and a tail. These gentry were cannibals. The people were named Nya Nyas, and they had teeth filed in a saw shape, and there were Nya Nyas in Turkey.

At Constantinople, in Santa Sophia, Mahomet Ghazi, the conqueror, rode on horseback to the altar, and devoted it, by the recital of the consecrated formula, to the worship of the one God of the Osmanli. The bishop who was officiating stepped into the wall, gospel in hand, and has been waiting with mitre and

crozier in the wall, four hundred years, for the return of the Byzantine empire.

Alas! the Ottomans have prophets too; they came to Byzantium under holy guidance. Eyoob or Job, a follower of the prophet, himself led the first attack on those triple walls, and falling, left his body and the prophecy of the apostle, as a pledge to those who were to achieve success. By a vision granted to a holy man, all this was revealed to Mahomet, and little reck he and his successors of the bishop of the idolators. The tomb of Eyoob, surrounded by the many sepulchres of sultans and warriors, stands on its holy ground, a monument to them of divine assurance.

But for their enemies, the bishop is not the only testimony. In the monastery of Balukli, outside the doomed walls, at the moment when the last of the Constantines died like a warrior on a mountain of slain, the monks of Balukli were frying fish. And the fish, more sensible to the events of this world than the monks, jumped off the gridiron into a sacred tank, where they still live to commemorate the dread event, and keep up hope in faithful Greeks. There they may be seen on their yearly festival; and I have seen them at other times by the offering of a silver coin. They still bear the stripes of the gridiron, as any one can witness. If a few fish can live for four hundred years, why should not the shiekhs near Mekka live twice that time!

Though the underground people are hidden, their treasures are sometimes found. Treasure-finding is a recognised way of attaining to fortune. Just as every poor family in England thinks an unknown uncle may bring them sudden wealth from India, so the native, nay, the European resident, in Turkey, never knows but in his very garden the tent of some Lydian king may give way to the mattock, and deliver up its wealth of gold and jewels. Silver is seldom expected, for it is better to have gold and jewels. According to received notions, but unrecorded by history, the old kings of these countries had the peculiarity of burying with them immense masses of treasure, jars upon jars of gold. Why they did it, reason saith not; but who knows who may have the luck to find the store?

There are tales enough of these discovered hoards received as profound truth. I have seen the spots where the tombs were rifled, and I have heard the names of the finders. I know a beautiful pass, with clumps of poplars and planes, called the Kavakli Dere, or Poplar Dale, where a Hellander, in the last century, is recorded by the universal popular voice to have discovered a tomb and treasure. He went back to the city, and, taking a negro slave as an assistant, gradually and steadily carried off the enormous prize. This he smuggled on board the fleet in the bay, and, lest the secret should leak out, he poisoned the black before sailing; yet the full and authentic particulars seem to be just as well known as if the dead negro had revealed them. Perhaps he did, for there is no want of ghosts in the East. There

was one in a well near my house that sorely troubled the neighbourhood.

Treasure adventures are not of the past only. I have been asked to join in more than one. It is always necessary to begin by buying the piece of ground in which the treasure is. I have lost more than one certain fortune by neglecting this preliminary step. One chance I lost, was very strong. The lucky discoverer had made a midnight venture on the ground, had opened a jar, and had handled costly jewels. Fearful of being discovered, he put them back again, and came post haste to me, next morning, for fifty pounds as an instalment on the land, and to get the jewels out. He did not get the fifty pounds from me, nor, I fear, from any one else; for he died some years afterwards without bequeathing gold, silver, or diamonds, to his heirs. The secret died with him.

One is not limited to gold. Luck may turn up in other ways. Statues are very good; for a small investment you may come upon a find like a Ballarat nugget; a thousand or two thousand pounds being a small sum for an English lord to pay for a statue. In my time the finds have been few, and of limited value; though fragments are being constantly turned up. One man told me he had found, in a villa in the interior, twelve statues as good as the Apollo Belvidere, and he offered me a half share of the find, on payment of a few hundred pounds down. If any statues were found, I believe they were garden images. A Turkish proprietor told me I might dig for statues or bas-reliefs on many parts of his property; and I believe him, for he was owner of the site of a city as large as Bristol or Norwich. It was, however, an inconvenient spot to transport heavy marbles from; and when it was not covered with the winter floods, it was poisonous with malaria. Such are the drawbacks, where there are real chances!

Visions beset the Levantine of cities in the interior, desolate, but with temples perfect and statuary standing. Some will tell you that they have found such places, when driven by brigands off the beaten route: cities unmarked on the maps and unnamed by the ancient geographers and historians. They could not stay, and have wished to return; but years have passed away, and their business has not yet permitted. The columns they saw were as polished as when new, and gleaming in snowy white brightness. Tombs are ever and anon said to be opened, in which lamps were found burning, which only went out when the fresh air entered. By the last flicker of such a lamp, the king whose body the light watched, visibly faded from his life-like colour, and his solid flesh and embroidered robes fell to dust.

All is fleeting, and all may perish. How sweet is the small valley, with its vines and figs and olives, its orange and citron trees yet scenting the air, its gardened houses, its lanes and hedgerows, the trickling stream and flowering shrubs! How charming yonder street—the palace, gaily painted, as a picture by itself; the free fountain next its gate speaks of the

bounty of its founders, mindful of the future ; the coffee-house gives shelter, in its shady balcony, to the reposing guests ! All is calm, with just so much air as cools and mellows the sunshine, and leaves us to enjoy its brilliancy unwearied ; yet in one moment shall all this, and all who live in it, be shaken to death and ruin ; one second more of the frequent earthquake, one further strain of power, and even the fallen ruins are engulfed, the sea-wave rolls over the spot, and black floods burst forth from the chasms in the soil.

There was one spot I often passed before I knew its story. A cathedral with jingling bells sent up a huge tower aloft, and around its precincts quiet monks filled the numerous chambers. The shops had their busy occupants, and climbing vines made canopies over the narrow ways ; many a traveller has marked the scene. One day, while I rested in a counting-house near there, an aged merchant told me how, in the great earthquake, his family had occupied the house at the corner of the cathedral yard. There they took refuge, and, after the first shocks, sought repose. His father, then a baby, lay on a mattress by a servant. Suddenly the ground opened, drawing in four men who lay next him, and, closing again, entombed them for ever. I seldom traversed the marble pavement but I thought what if the earth should yawn again, as of yore !

In mere worldly things, none know what eyes behold them, even in the open streets. Those veiled Turkish women wander about observant of all, and known to none. Yon lady in a dove-coloured ferijee, whom you cannot distinguish, is perhaps a bosom confidante of your own wife. That coarse native woman in crinoline, the suspicious Greek may fear to be the governor-general in person, disguised, watching evil-doers. He who ventures forth at night does so at the risk of encountering Haroun Alraschid and his attendant, Mesrour ; and if he stop at home they may be listening under his windows. An Armenian may be scared to death by an unknown soap-vendor, who follows him about, pressing soap and conversation on him, and whom he believes to be the Sultan Caliph of Islam so arrayed, or the Grand Vizier.

What seems and is not, or what is, who knows—in the East ? Philosophy and theology flourish on the borders between the real and the imaginary. The power of magic comes to relieve unsettled minds and to reassure the vulgar, who are more numerous than the select, if there be any select, who believe not in magic and its kindred sciences. Islam could not conquer magic ; it only consecrated its power and furnished it with new means of incantation. The magi of the East are defunct, but the magician of Africa, the Moor, the Maghrelî, rules with traditional might, adapts the science, and weaves the cuneiform characters of Babylon into his weird alphabet. All Islam confirms the power of magic. What the magician does to find stolen napkins or bring back lost lovers, the dervish acknow-

ledges as potent to expel disease and restore life. The great name of God may be written in wondrous shapes. Here, such an emblem protects a house from fire ; there, in a tablet it shields the tailor from the temptations of dishonesty. It is over the doorway of the mosque and the shop of the magician. The magician is not now so favoured as of old, but his shop is sometimes to be seen, with specimens in the windows of white and holy charms, horoscopes, tables of magic letters and magic squares, ineffable names. I remember one fellow's shop, and he had a talking parrot hanging over the door. An incredulous passenger remarked to me that the parrot was cleverer than the magician ; but the magician drove an excellent trade.

In warding off evil, securing fickle love, promising children, curing sickness, and discovering theft, the talisman-dealer, the magician, and the astrologer, yet thrive throughout the East. The gipsy is a missionary to be found in every house. There is nothing too impossible for credulity. A modern conjuror drew five francs a head from a large community by sending round his carte-de-visite, representing him with his head at his feet. An intelligent audience of educated persons was highly indignant that this part of the performance did not come off.

One marvel I have read in a voracious book : to wit, that the heads of beheaded ladies and slaves are to be seen floating down the Bosphorus in hampers daily, wherefore people are not allowed to catch fish, and are afraid to eat fish. I have eaten fish and seen hampers, but I never had the good luck to see a hamper of ladies' heads, or to meet with any one who had. One head would raise a mob of the women of Constantinople.

AS THE CROW FLIES.

DUE EAST. YARMOUTH.

YARMOUTH, with its population of thirty thousand herring catchers and eaters, stands on the confluence of the Yar, the Waveney, and the Bure, in the centre of a low sandy peninsula, surrounded by those rivers and the German ocean. The scenery on the Bure, as the crow approaches Yarmouth, strikes that restless bird as peculiarly Dutch. Towards the sea, the pumps driven by wind are superseded by scoop wheels driven by more resolute and active steam. There are cattle swimming across the river at Runham and Manby, where the banks are protected with flints ; the water becomes gay with flashing wherries ; and presently there appear houses with quaint gables and dormer windows, lines of trees, and masts of ships rising among roofs ; presently sand-hills glisten against the sun, and the curious crow's nest look-out at Caistor shows conspicuously against the sky. More gardens, orchards, and boats, an old round tower, with a conical roof, on the left bank, and the crow has Yarmouth all before him where to choose.

The sea has not encroached upon the Yar-

mouth sands since the reign of Elizabeth. About Cromer way, the earth is yielding to the sea in all directions; here at Yarmouth the earth is conquering. The theory (and it gives a curious notion of the vast agencies at work in reshaping the outer surface of the earth) is this: only a portion of the great tidal wave of the Atlantic passes up the channel through the Straits of Dover; the great mass moving more swiftly up the west, sweeps round the Orkneys, and pours down southward between Norway and Scotland. Wherever, therefore, a river stream breaks a passage through this southward-beating pulsation of the great ocean's heart, there sand-banks are deposited at the angle where the two forces meet.

Yarmouth, first mentioned in 1081, was originally a mere cluster of tarry fishermen's huts on a sand-bank at the mouth of the Yare. Its first charter, establishing Yarmouth as a sort of herring kingdom, was granted in 1108, and confirmed by successive sovereigns until 1702; the year before Queen Anne came to the throne. Henry the Second allowed a wall to be built, enclosing the houses on the land side. The serviceable old rampart is still to be traced through the quaint narrow streets of Yarmouth. At Ramp Row the wall is supported within by arched recesses seven feet deep. The poor people, who here live in tumble-down tenements, use the recesses as pantries or bedrooms. "A Ramp Row goose," is the Yarmouth metonym for a herring. Close by the Priory national schools, there is more of the wall, while a ruined tower is to be found in an adjoining nursery garden. Southward it runs to a third tower, now used as a dwelling-house. The wall appears again in solid, unimpaired flintwork facing the North Denes. It is cut in two by a street, but reappears in the rear of a yard where anchors are stored; and presently the versatile rampart forms one side of a rope-walk. It turns up often again behind hovels, sheds, stables, and smoke houses: such are the crow's flying glimpses of it.

French and Flemish Protestant refugees, escaping from the Guises and from Spanish Philip, established themselves at Yarmouth during the reigns of James and Charles, and gave to the crowds in the lanes of this Norfolk Genoa, a republican and anti-state church tone. Bradshaw, the Puritan law sergeant, who presided at King Charles's trial, and who declared with his dying breath that if the deed were to do again he would do it, resided for some time at the Star Inn, Yarmouth.

On July 9, 1642, Yarmouth had declared openly for the Parliament, and was thenceforward harassed by the Lowestoft Cavaliers' cruisers. The consequence was that when the tide turned Yarmouth had to turn, and within a few days of each other presented enthusiastic addresses to Richard Cromwell and Charles the Second. The swarthy "mutton-eating" king came to the town for some reason or other in 1671, and having received a present of three golden herrings, dubbed three of the richest herring sellers knights.

At various periods all sorts of great men embarked and disembarked at Yarmouth. But the most honoured name among them is that of Nelson. He landed on this Norfolk coast close to his own birthplace, November 6, 1800, after the great victory of the Nile, when he had captured all the French fleet except four ships, and blown up L'Orient in spite of the batteries of Aboukir. The memory of the great admiral is treasured at the Star Hotel, once the residence of the Howards, then of Bradshaw. "The Nelson Room" is still the palladium of the building. In this oak-panelled chamber, with its arched fillets and diaper work, its quaint female figures with animals' heads, and its scroll-bordered ceiling with pendants, Nelson once dined; and his portrait painted by Keymer, a quaker admirer, still hangs on the wall.

Yarmouth has been often compared to Genoa, and a writer, by no means unknown to the public, has named the many-alleyed town "the Norfolk Gridiron." The five principal streets are crossed at right angles by one hundred and fifty-six rows or narrow lanes, which are, on an average, about eight feet wide. The reason of this minute subdivision of street way is that in the old time the teeming city was pressed in by a wall on the north, south, and east sides two hundred and forty yards long, and on the west by a wall two thousand and thirty yards long. Within this box the population lay, to use a simile not inappropriate to the herring town, like herrings in a barrel. These little lanes are so narrow that you can touch both walls by stretching out your hands while passing. They necessitated a special low, long, narrow vehicle, first introduced in Henry the Seventh's time, and hence popularly known as "Harry-carries." These Dutch-looking trolley carts are sledges twelve feet long by three feet six inches broad; are mounted on wheels two feet nine inches high; and are drawn by one horse, the driver standing on the cross-staves. A topographical writer of 1777 shows how simple Norfolk society was at that era, when many of these Harry-carries, painted red, green, and blue, plied for hire, and were let out to visitors wishing to drive to the Fort, the Quay, or the Denes.

Yarmouth quay has been compared to the Boompjes at Rotterdam, with its commingled trees, masts, and houses. The Dutch Clock, the quaintest spot on the banks of the Yare, is an old sixteenth-century building, now used as a public library and an office for toll receivers and Haven commissioners; it was formerly a place where Dutch and Flemish refugees celebrated in quiet and phlegmatic gratitude their morning prayers; and here Brinsley, the non-conformist, when driven from St. Nicholas church, preached the tenets of toleration. In olden times the town waits assembled on the roof on summer Sunday evenings. The old clock, that has seen out many generations, still counts the hours; and the ancient carved stone mariner's compass, three feet in diameter, remains in front of the old building.

The crow perceives that the houses in the market-place are old, and have a character of their own; also, that the fish-market displays on its shields the half fishes, half lions, which are the heraldic glory of Yarmouth. The Fisherman's Hospital, a low, quadrangular building, with curious gables, dates back to the last year of William of Orange. A carved ship, tossed ceaselessly on stormy waves, is placed over an inner doorway; and a large statue of Charity guards a contribution-box in the middle of the court. No ancient mariner is admitted within this tranquil precinct until he has battled the storms and waves of this troublesome world three score years.

The four rustling avenues of lime-trees, delicious when in blossom, lead to the old priory church of St. Nicholas, the great saint of the Norfolk fishermen. The enormous building, which will hold six thousand if tightly and professionally packed, is the great composite of many pious ages. In 1338 the bachelors of Yarmouth began to build an aisle in this church, but were stayed by a plague. After that, it boasted of seventeen chapels and the right of sanctuary. It has known various desecrations. For more than three hundred years the ignoble corporation picked up all the brasses and melted them into weights. Still worse, a little later, all the grave-stones were drawn, like so many teeth, and shamefully sent to Newcastle to be shaped into grindstones. During the Puritan period three congregations met at the same time in this enormous church. The partitions dividing the three enclosures were only finally removed about twenty years ago.

After the "Ballast Keel," with its fourteenth-century arch and Jacobean ceiling—the ruins of the Franciscan friary in the road leading to Gaol-street—and the old house with herring-bone masonry in George and Dragon-row—the most remarkable bit of antiquity in Yarmouth, is Mr. Palmer's house on the quay, built 1596; the date appears on a chimney-piece carving. This house once belonged to John Carter, a bailiff of Yarmouth in the parliamentary times. Cromwell often visited him, and his son married Mary Ireton, daughter of the stern general. Tradition says that in this house was held the final consultation of the parliamentary leaders, at which they decided upon the death of the king; that the principal Puritan officers assembled in the oak-pannelled drawing-room up-stairs for privacy; and that it was strictly commanded that no person should come near the room except one man appointed to attend. The dinner (tradition adds) was ordered at four o'clock, and was put off from time to time till past eleven at night: when the council came down to a very short repast, and immediately all set off post, some for London, and some for the quarters of the army.

Whatever wind blows, blows hard here, and the friendly lights of Caistor and Gorleston are too often powerless to save the driven vessel. In 1692 out of two hundred sail of those colliers which always make Yarmouth their favourite roadstead on their way from Newcastle, one

hundred and forty were battered to pieces on the Yare shoals. In May, 1860, upwards of two hundred fishermen were lost here. Nor, in mentioning real Yarmouth wrecks, must we forget the novelist's or the poet's wrecks. It was off this place that Robinson Crusoe got into trouble; here, too, a certain person named Steerforth was overtaken by his destiny. Indeed, the harbour planned by Joas Johnson, a Dutchman, in 1567, the south pier (two thousand feet long, and built on oak trunks), the leafy Commercial quay, the south quay, improved by Sir John Rennie, and still more than all these, the Britannia jetty (which cost five thousand pounds), recalls to the crow other passages of David Copperfield's Yarmouth career, as, for example, his picture of the fishermen's quarter. "I smelt the fish, and pitch, and tar, and oakum, and saw the sailors walking about, and the carts jingling up and down over the stony lanes, bestrewn with bits of chip and little hillocks of sand; past gasworks, ropewalks, boat-builders' yards, shipwrights' yards, shipbreaker's yards, riggers' lofts, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon a dull waste and desolate flat." In this quarter tarry palings are hung with blackish brown nets, and tar-coloured sails are everywhere being dried or patched, rolled up, or unfolded. Here are herring yawls, and mackerel boats, and those sturdy cobbles that come from Whitby and Scarborough, bringing periwinkles and pickled mushrooms. Here, too, are the decked boats that brave the wolfish gales of the North Sea, and that used in old times even to defy the crushing ice floes of Greenland, in search of the whale.

Herrings are not alone the arms; they are the very legs of Yarmouth. The town lives on them, and stands by them. In 1798 Yarmouth had only sixteen fishing boats, Lowestoft twenty-four, and the Yorkshire men forty. In 1833 there were one hundred Norfolk boats (chiefly Yarmouth) to the forty or fifty of Yorkshire, the whole employing a capital of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. In these present times, a recent able writer says, there are two hundred Yarmouth boats and forty Yorkshire and Sussex cobbles, catching every season six or seven score million herrings, of the value of two hundred thousand pounds. The mackerel fishing employs one hundred boats and fourteen hundred men and women. Every mackerel lugger costs seven or eight hundred pounds, and carries eighty or a hundred nets, each twenty yards long by eight and a half broad. Every herring boat is worth from six hundred to a thousand pounds. It is calculated that half a million of money is, in one way or other, invested at Yarmouth in reaping the fish harvest. The herring harvest commences at the end of September, and the glittering millions of over population with which the North Sea then teems are dragged out for ten consecutive weeks. A recent topographical traveller has collected with patient care and skill some curious close-pressed facts on the subject of Yarmouth's ceaseless industry. On those rough October nights, when the sands froth and boil crimson, in the slant

light of the red beacon, these Norfolk seas are literally coagulated with herrings, and the nets bring them up in tumbling heaps of loose and spangled silver. A single Yarmouth boat has been known to bring in from twelve to sixteen lasts, each last being ten barrels, or ten thousand herrings!

Oak-logs, the crow is informed, are used to smoke the best herrings; but the Birmingham bloater being of a lower caste is seasoned by hazel wood and fir loppings. A smoke house, half malt-kiln, half "oast" house, is a large oblong tower, forty or fifty feet high, without floors. Above are transverse compartments divided by partitions of horizontal rails. In these open racks or "loves" lie the laths or "speets." The herring, arriving by cart from the beach to fulfil his destiny for the good of a higher species, is first thrown with his fellows into a brick recess, sprinkled with salt, and left for several days. The duration of the vaporous purgatory depends on the destination of the fish. If he be a Belgravian bloater, a bloated aristocrat, he merely hangs twenty-four hours until he begins to swell with self-importance, and is prepared for packing; if a "Straits man" for the Mediterranean ports, he lingers longer; if he be a mere black herring, for the chandlers, or the tally shop, he serves his full ten days, and emerges hard, dark, and salt. On emerging from their bath the herrings are run through the gills by gangs of skilful women called "ryvers," who "speet" them on long sticks; eight women speeting eight lasts of herrings (thirteen thousand two hundred herrings to a last) in a day. For each last the women get three shillings and ninepence. The speets are then placed by climbing men on the loves, tier by tier, until the smoke-house is full. The fire is then lighted, the oil begins to distil, and the herrings slowly turn yellow, dusky orange, dingy red, or black, according to the duration of the smoking. "Last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history," comes the packer, who removes the speets, and strips the fish into the barrels in the radiating order in which they are to lie, until each barrel has its regulated seven hundred and fifty (thirteen dozen to the hundred).

The scenes on the old jetty when the mackerel boats are coming in and the fish auctions are beginning, are very picturesque. This moment there is nothing visible but a few bald flag-staves marking the auction stands, tangles of straw, piles of madder-coloured nets, heaps of baskets and empty oily tubs, some old mermaids in blue aprons, and some old fishermen in oilskin dreadnaughts and long boots. Some tan-coloured sails lop round in sight. Instantly the jetty comes to life. The ferry boats mounted with iron skates are shoved down to the water and warped out; the tubs are also rolled down and got ready. The boats come in, crowded with mackerel baskets. The nautical women gather round the auctioneer, who stands with a red book in one hand, and a bell in the other. He rings the bell, and announces, with true Saxon brevity: "Here I

have so many hundred and so many quarters at so much a hundred." The baskets are instantly emptied into tubs half full of water, and the women wash and pack the perishable fish in layers (sixty mackerel to a basket), six score to the hundred, the largest fish on the top. Straw is spread over the fish, down go the lids of the baskets, scaly hands tie the reddened strings, scaly hands lift the loads into quick railway carts, and off they fly to expectant London and hungry Birmingham.

But the editorial trumpet sounds, and the crow must strike off towards Cromer and the northern part of the North Sea: first recalling that on this dangerous north shore, brave Captain Manby, in 1808, tested his apparatus for saving the crews of stranded ships by throwing them a line attached to a shot from a mortar. By night, fireworks are used with this apparatus, which burst at the height of three hundred yards, and diffuse a clear light over every object, so that the aim can be properly directed. In twenty years the Manby system saved fifty-eight vessels, and four hundred and ten human beings. Turner, never tired of the sea, painted a fine grave picture of the Yarmouth sands at twilight, with the Manby mortar just discharging its shell.

Swift now on the wing over the Denes—broad green levels, with dull patches here and there of loose sand, sprinkled with selfheal, stonecrop, and sand-wort. Poising over the Nelson Column, our black friend, who needs no staircases, no towers along the steep, catches at one glance of his intelligent eye, miles of the flat level across Breyden water, along the Yare, and sees from Gorleston heights to the Suffolk cliffs, stretching towards Lowestoft. Yarmouth way lies the great sapphire pavement of the sea, speckled with flocks of brown fishing-boats. He sees, too, the light-ships marking the entrance, and a tossing line of froth where the shoals begin, as he looks towards Amsterdam.

TWO SONNETS.

I. DESPONDENCY.

My life is as a weary bridge of sighs,
"A palace and a prison on each hand;"
But I have left my youth's bright palaces,
And passed the portals of love's fairy land,
And entered on that dark and dreary path
Which every earth-born traveller must tread,
Wherein the soul no joy or solace hath,
No refuge from its anguish or its dread,
Save in that prison-house the grave.
Regret, remorse, for time mispent and gone,
Jailors, whose cruelty I dare not brave,
Walk at my side, and goad me sternly on,
While through the arches moan continually
The stranded wrecks of life's fast ebbing sea.

II. REPROOF.

Oh, say not thus; thy life is as a stair,
Of which the first steps lean upon the earth;
With each ascent you rise to purer air:
Below are clouds; above the stars have birth.
Though fair and sunny Earth's alluring bowers,
Break through her dear enchantments and pursue
Thy path right onward; all those fruits and flowers
O'er which thou treadest now shall bloom anew,
And live eternal through eternal hours!
And as you higher climb, and from your view

Earth's soft green pleasure fades, faint not, nor fear.
Though solemn in its loneliness the road,
Death's stars shine high above thee, bright and clear,
And, won the height, the last step leads to God!

A GENTLEMAN OF THE PRESS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

It is all very well to be "a gentleman of the press," in the quiet times of Queen Victoria, but it was not so very well in the troublous days of good Queen Elizabeth, or those, scarcely less troublous, of good Queen Anne. Those who by the pen and the printing machine offended Queen Elizabeth, or her administration, or any member thereof, might, and did, have their hands cut off, their tongues slit, or their necks subjected to the unpleasant process which rids the world of murderers. In Queen Anne's days, it was not so bad, but still it was bad enough; for the pillory and long imprisonment were not agreeable commentaries upon a mere difference of political or theological opinion. And of all the gentlemen of the press who ever lived, DANIEL DEFOE—whose lot was cast in the middle term, between the disgrace and adversity of Elizabethan and the honour and prosperity of the Victorian era—may serve as a doughty specimen of the class that has done so much for the liberty of England. And Defoe was not merely a gentleman of the press, and a journalist of rare powers, but a literary genius of the highest rank. Never since books began to be printed, was there so popular a story as Robinson Crusoe, and that not alone in the language in which it was first written, but in that of every European tongue into which it has been translated. Next to the Bible, the Arabian Nights Entertainments, and Æsop's Fables, the not altogether fictitious history of the shipwrecked mariner of Hull is, perhaps, the best-known book in the world. Had its author produced nothing else, he would have established a claim to a foremost place in the illustrious company of the English authors who have made the world happier by their genius. But this book, delightful as it is, is not the only one which England owes to the sound sense and cultivated intellect of Daniel Defoe. Robinson Crusoe enshrines him in our hearts, but hundreds of tracts and volumes on all the great questions of his day and ours, in the discussion of which he was invariably found on the side of common sense and justice, mark him out as a grandee of literature. His mind was alike logical and dramatic, and to sum up his personal and intellectual character, he may be briefly

described as a brave, simple, honest, industrious, far-seeing man of genius, one of the noble souls who, with the greatest amount of brain as well as heart, have helped to build up the liberties of England, risking reputation, fortune, and life in the great struggle of the people to achieve the civil and religious liberty which arbitrary power would resist or deny. It is true that long after all the heats and animosities which this great writer excited in his lifetime, have been cooled and laid at rest in the grave, a spot has been discovered on his hitherto unsullied name. Before discussing the spot in question, which may not, after all, be so very large or so very black as those who love to disparage greatness because they themselves are little, have sought to represent it, let us discourse upon the life and character of Defoe, as if no such discovery had been made, until we come to the period of his career when it is necessary to mention it, along with those discoveries of his hitherto unknown and unsuspected writings which grew out of it.

The father of Daniel Defoe was one James Foe, a wealthy butcher and well-known Dissenter, in Cripplegate, in the city of London. His son Daniel was born in the year 1661. Daniel, who did not begin to call himself Defoe till he was twenty-five, received a good education, and, in due course of time, was placed by his father in the establishment of a hosier. At the age of twenty-four he was enabled, by his father's assistance, to start in business on his own account in Freeman's-court, Cornhill. But his mind was not wholly in the shop, and his heart as well as his intellect was stirred by the great events of his time. Believing that the Protestant religion was endangered by the bigotry and misgovernment of James the Second, and sympathising warmly in the objects of the gallant but luckless enterprise of the Duke of Monmouth, the gallant hosier, leaving for awhile his business to his assistants, or shutting up shop altogether (for on neither of these two points have his biographers been able to tell us anything authentic), took up arms in support of the Protestant Prince, and fought in the ranks as a private soldier. "The religion and liberties of his country, and especially of the Dissenters, were at stake," says MR. LEE, whose *Life and Recently Discovered Writings of Defoe* form the text upon which we write; "the agitation among his friends in the city of London was great; his ardent love of free-

dom led him to join with them, and, carried away by the tide of popular excitement, he armed and followed the Duke of Monmouth's standard." This was all very well for a patriot, but it was not very well for a tradesman. Nor was it the only time during his commercial career that he grasped the sword or shouldered the gun as a rebel and a revolutionist. A short time previous to the flight of James the Second from the country he had endeavoured to betray, and the temper and character of whose people he so egregiously misunderstood, Defoe, unable to confine his attention to his business, threw in his lot with the Revolution. No sooner did the news of the landing and advance of the Prince of Orange arrive in London, than Defoe, then in his twenty-seventh year, mounted his horse, and rode out, well armed and equipped, to meet the army of liberation at Henley-on-Thames. Though he had no occasion to fight for the cause he had adopted, he was ready to do so, and marched back with the army towards the capital. On the 18th of December, the Prince of Orange made his triumphal entry into London, and Defoe, full of the greatness of the occasion, narrates, "that it was with inexpressible joy that he heard delivered, at the bar of the House of Lords, in a message from the Commons, by Mr. Hampden, of Buckinghamshire, 'that it is inconsistent with the constitution of this Protestant kingdom to be governed by a Popish prince.'" And Defoe not only offered his sword when it might have been needed, but for years afterwards gave his time, his intellect, and his pen to the cause he had at heart, writing and publishing a series of tracts and pamphlets in support of the principles of the Revolution.

After a time his commercial affairs began, as was not at all extraordinary under the circumstances, to be seriously disordered; and in 1692 an angry creditor took out a commission of bankruptcy against him. This, however, was soon superseded on the petition of other creditors, who had faith in Defoe's probity, by whose means a composition was effected. Ten years afterwards, when Defoe had made many enemies by his writings among the Jacobite party, and even among his own friends, by a satire entitled *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, a political opponent bore striking testimony to his commercial integrity. "I must do one piece of justice to the man," says Turchin, in a Dialogue between a Dissenter and Observer, "though I love him

no better than you do. It is this; that meeting a gentleman in a coffee-house when I, and everybody else, were railing at him, the gentleman took us up with this short speech. Gentlemen, said he, I know this Defoe as well as any of you, for I was one of his creditors, who compounded with him, and discharged him fully. Several years afterwards he sent for me, and though he was clearly discharged, he paid me all the remainder of the debt, voluntarily and of his own accord, and he told me that so far as God should enable him, he intended to do the same with everybody. When he had done, he desired me to set my hand to a paper to acknowledge it, which I readily did, and found a great many names in the paper before me; and I think myself bound to own it, though I am no friend to the book he wrote, no more than you are."

The hosiery business had not prospered with Defoe the soldier; neither did that of a trade in skins and furs, in which he afterwards became interested. His thoughts were on affairs of state, and not in his ledger and daybook. To aid him to pay his way in the world, he accepted, about the year 1700, the office of secretary to a company established near Tilbury in Essex, for the manufacture of bricks and pantiles. He ultimately became owner of this concern, and devoted to its interest as much time as he could spare from the cause, by no means assured in that day, of religious liberty. Had he left off writing, and attended solely to his bricks and pantiles he might have become a rich, a prosperous, and contented citizen; and left a fortune, though possibly not a name, behind him. But Defoe was a born political genius, and was never happy but when he had the pen in his hand, using it in defence of the right, in denunciation of the wrong, sometimes earnestly, sometimes jestingly, but always forcibly. He had the art of placing himself so exactly in the position of his fictitious characters, as to make the world believe them to be real. His unlucky satire, *A Short Way with the Dissenters*, in which he assumed the part of an intolerant persecutor who would serve the Dissenters of England as Torquemada did the religious malcontents of Spain, deceived both parties. The high Tories of the time at first believed the book to be genuine, and were never weary of chanting its praises. The Dissenters also believed it to be the true utterances of a persecutor who meant what he said, and were equally loud in its condemnation. But when it came to be known that Defoe was the author, its real object was

apparent, and the High Church party, indignant that they should have been the victims of such a hoax, clamoured lustily for the author's punishment. The Tory government of the day no sooner discovered that its grave irony was to be taken in a contrary sense, from that in which it appeared to be written, than they resolved to crush the author, if possible, by a State prosecution. Defoe fled, and the government advertised him in the *London Gazette* of the 10th of January, 1703, offering a reward of thirty pounds for his apprehension. He was described as "a middle sized, spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown coloured hair—but wearing a wig," and as having "a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth." Defoe lay in hiding for some time, to the serious injury of his business; but ultimately surrendered to take his trial, with the hope that no punishment would be inflicted upon him, for a piece of political irony. In this hope, as will appear hereafter, he was grievously disappointed; and the pantile works, in the absence of their directing head, had to be closed and the manufacture discontinued. In this venture Defoe lost, or became responsible for, about three thousand five hundred pounds.

After this collapse, trade and commerce knew the brave man no more. He had long ago discovered his true vocation, and henceforth he determined to make it his only one. Trade, as he knew to his cost, required a constant and unflinching allegiance, if the trader were not to flounder into bankruptcy; and such allegiance it was impossible for him to bestow. For the future his pen became his main if not his sole reliance for his daily bread and the support of his family. Here let us take leave of him in his character of a tradesman: with the sole remark, that if he were unfortunate, he was never dishonest. He failed, it is true; but without a stain upon his integrity, and in the case of the brick and pantile manufactory, his ruin was the work of his political enemies, and not in any degree of his own commercial mismanagement. And furthermore it must be recorded to his honour, that not only his brick and pantile debts, but every other debt contracted in his commercial life, was discharged to the uttermost farthing—before the strong soul shuffled off this mortal coil, and rested in peace from its manifold labours.

Had he lived in our day, Defoe would most probably have been the editor of some great daily or weekly newspaper, or the

writer of its most powerful leading articles. In his day, to a great extent, the pamphlet performed the functions of the newspaper; and as a pamphleteer he occupied the very first rank among his contemporaries. From the Revolution of 1688 to the accession of George the First, his pen was never idle. Unavowedly and unknown, he was equally busy through the whole reign of George the First, and a portion of that of George the Second. During all this time he employed himself on every subject, no matter what, that interested the crown, the parliament, or the people. In attack or in defence, in solemn earnest, or in grave and sometimes grim banter, he was always powerful, and always just. And it was known of him in his own day, as is remembered to his honour in ours, that he never attacked the weak and the defenceless. "From being a boxing English boy," as he said of himself in an autobiographical passage in his *Review*, "I learned this early piece of generosity, not to hit my enemy when he is down."

Defoe wrote many pamphlets and papers in support of the principles of which King William was the representative and the defender, and soon became known, at least by name, to that monarch, as one of the staunchest supporters of his throne against the reactionary Jacobites. The services thus rendered, recommended him to the government as a powerful writer who ought both to be encouraged and employed, and in the year 1694, as he himself states, he was, without the least application on his own part, appointed accountant to the commissioners for the glass duty, in which service he continued till the glass duty was abolished in 1699. This employment, while it lasted, never interfered with his literary work. On the first of August, 1700, there appeared what Defoe called "a vile abhorred pamphlet, in very ill verse, written by one Mr. Turchin, and called *The Foreigners*; in which the author (who he was I then knew not) fell personally upon the king himself, and then upon the Dutch nation. And after having reproached his majesty with crimes that his worst enemies could not think of without horror, he sums up all in the odious name of a Foreigner. This filled me with a kind of rage against the book, and gave birth to a trifle which I never could hope should have met with so general an acceptance as it did: I mean *The True Born Englishman*." This work, was the first, known to be by Defoe, which achieved great popularity. It took the town by storm, and not only ran rapidly through several

legal editions to the author's profit, but was pirated on every hand, and sold in penny copies at the corner of every street. "It is very probable," says Mr. Lee, "that from the invention of printing to 1701, an equal number of copies of any book had never been sold within the space of one year."

This tract did more for Defoe than make him popular with the multitude; it gained him the friendship of the king, the man whom of all others in England, he most esteemed, and in whose cause he had wrought and fought, and the success of whose principles he looked upon as identified with the happiness of his country. The king sought and obtained his friendship, and was accustomed to consult him privately on affairs of state; but Defoe never divulged their confidence, and he only informed the world incidentally after the king's death, that on the subject of the French war of 1703, to which he had opposed himself in several pamphlets, the king asked him, this war having been irrevocably determined upon, to draw up a scheme of operations by which it might be made as little onerous as possible to the people, in which he recommended an attack against the Spanish West Indies, which the king fully approved. Had his majesty lived Defoe was to have had an honourable part in its execution. Reverting after the king's death to the kindnesses he had received at his hands, Defoe wrote in his Review, "I am not at all vain in saying I had the honour to know more of his majesty than some of those who insulted him knew of his house, and I think, if my testimony was able to add to his bright reputation, I could give such particulars of his being not a man of morals only, but of serious piety and religion as few kings in the world, in these latter ages of time, can come up to."

The death of King William was a serious blow to the rising political fortunes of Defoe. But there was much work to do, and he did it in his own way, though doubtful whether the favour of the new court would be extended to a man who was so strong an opponent of the pretensions of her majesty's Roman Catholic father, to which her majesty herself, Protestant as she was, was supposed to have a leaning. The Whigs who served King William were dismissed, and a Tory ministry appointed within two months after Queen Anne's accession; facts that prefigured to Defoe that a stormy time was before the nation, and before him as an individual whose duty and avocation and sole business in life it

was to keep the nation true to the principles of the Revolution. The opening of the year 1702 had seen Defoe the honoured and confidential friend of a powerful sovereign, and apparently on the high road to fame and fortune. The king's death changed all. The court knew him not, except to mistrust him. The new House of Commons, if not in a Jacobite majority, had a majority opposed to the Whig and Protestant principles, that drove out James the Second and seated William the Third on the throne. This majority favoured Roman Catholicism and English High Churchism, and was bitterly opposed to the Dissenters, of whom Defoe was the most eminent champion. But he held on the even tenor of his way; convinced, and as he said "positively assured," that he was in the right. Queen Anne had been less than six months' upon the throne when Defoe published the pamphlet already alluded to, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. Defoe's intention, when he eventually surrendered to take his trial for this publication, was to justify his pamphlet, and to prove that everything he had said in jest and irony, as to the best mode of exterminating the Dissenters, had been said in solemn earnest by leading members of the High Church party. But he was prevailed upon to withdraw the plea of justification, and simply confessing the authorship, to throw himself upon the mercy of the queen. The result proved that he acted unwisely. There was to be no mercy on this occasion. He was sentenced to pay a fine of two hundred marks, to stand three times in the pillory, to be imprisoned during the queen's pleasure, and to find sureties for his good behaviour for seven years. The sentence was intended to be an infamous one; and it *was* infamous—not to Defoe, but to the government which pronounced it. He was removed from the dock to Newgate, there to remain for twenty days, until he was placed in the pillory. Even in this dreary interval his pen was not idle, for he found time and means to complete and send to the printer, a work on which he had been previously engaged, entitled *The Shortest Way to Peace and Union*, by the author of *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. The object of this tract was to reconcile the Church to the Dissenters, and the Dissenters to the Church. "Thus the noble Christian peacemaker," as Mr. Lee well says, "endeavoured to return good for evil to the enemies who had endeavoured to crush him, and to the friends who had

forsaken him." He also composed in this interval his celebrated Hymn to the Pillory, in which he placed his persecutors in a moral pillory, worse than the physical pillory, in which he was to stand; and gibbeted their names, not for a day only, but for all time.

Both of these works were published on the 29th of July, on the very day on which he was first made a public spectacle before the Royal Exchange in Cornhill. But a strong reaction had set in in favour of this martyr of liberty, and lest any Tory in the crowd should think it incumbent to pelt Defoe with eggs, cabbages, filth, or stones, with which it was the custom to pelt the petty criminals exhibited in the pillory, the crowd merely pelted his feet with summer flowers, and formed a guard of honour to protect him from insult or injury, ornamented the steps and beams of the pillory with wreaths and garlands, drank to his health, long life, and prosperity, in bumpers of flowing liquor; intermingling their expressions of gratitude to Defoe with shouts of execration against the judge who had sentenced him, and the ministers of the crown who had incited his prosecution. On the following day he was again placed in the pillory, opposite the conduit in Cheapside, and on the third day on the Westminster side of Temple Bar, on both of which occasions his shame was turned into his triumph by the crowd, and he whom the pillory had failed to shame, sanctified the very pillory by his bravery and innocence. The Hymn to the Pillory, which in a manner recommitted the offence which had brought the author face to face with the law, had a large sale among the crowd assembled to witness his exposure. Expostulating with the Pillory, he indignantly bade it speak to the people and

Tell them the men that placed him there
Are scandals to the times,
Are at a loss to find his guilt,
And can't commit his crimes.

The government was politic enough to take no notice of this new composition.

After these three exposures, which might have been called ovations, Defoe was re-consigned to Newgate, where, it is to be supposed, he had private accommodation not accorded to ordinary prisoners, inasmuch as he continued his literary labours in the cause which he had at heart, and to support a wife and six children by their sale. Having, as it seemed, ruined Defoe pecuniarily, the Tory government of Queen Anne bethought themselves whether, in his misery and distress, he might not be

bought over to their side, and whether, for a valuable consideration, release from prison, and the promise of employment, he might not be induced to betray the confidence of the late king. The Earl of Nottingham appears to have either gone or sent to him in Newgate on this errand; but Defoe, to use his own brave words, "scorned to come out of Newgate at the price of betraying a dead master, or discovering those things which nobody would have been the worse (or the better) for." During the next six or eight months, while he lay in prison, he wrote, or published, having previously written, a whole library of pamphlets, the mere list of which, if it prove nothing else, proves a marvellous industry,—a marvellous courage; and a soul that no misfortune, or adverse circumstance, could daunt, as long as there was work to undertake in the service of the people. These pamphlets, amounting in all to sixteen, and supplemented before his release from prison by almost as many more, were but the recreations of the massive intellect that still craved for work. On the 19th of February appeared the first number of a weekly periodical, entitled *The Review*, started by Defoe, and carried on by him, alone and unaided, and in the midst of all but incredible difficulties, for nine years afterwards. It was published once a week for the first two months, afterwards twice a week, and finally, when he had recovered his liberty, thrice a week; and claims notice, not only as being Defoe's, but as being the forerunner, and to some extent the model, of the weekly reviews and newspapers of the present day. While thus working, striving, and, like the equally brave John Milton before him, "bating no jot of heart or hope," a gleam of better fortune shone into his prison. Legion's Address to the Lords, supporting the House of Peers in their hostility to the reactionary policy of the Jacobite and Tory majority in the Commons, excited more than ordinary attention, and was generally suspected, but not positively known, to be Defoe's. It has never been included in the list of his works, but is traced to his pen by Mr. Lee, on what appear to be satisfactory grounds. However this may be, the pamphlet did good service to the Protestant and liberal cause, and, like a straw upon the wind, showed the way in which the current of opinion was blowing. Towards the end of the month in which it appeared a ministerial crisis occurred: the Tory administration was dismissed, the Whigs returned to power: and Harley, afterwards Earl of

Oxford, became prime minister. Harley had been but a short time in office when he endeavoured to procure Defoe's release, with the view of securing his services as a paid writer for the new government. His efforts were not immediately successful. Harley, who only knew Defoe by his writings, as Defoe only knew Harley by his public character and services, was slow at the work of release, on account of obstacles in the way, but was steady and sure; and the case having been personally brought under the notice of Queen Anne, "her Majesty," as Defoe narrates, "was pleased particularly to inquire into my circumstances and family, and by the Lord Treasurer Godolphin to send a considerable supply to my wife and family, and to send me the prison money to pay my fine and the expenses of my discharge. Here," he adds, "is the foundation on which I first built my first sense of duty to her Majesty's person, and the indelible bond of gratitude to my first benefactor (Harley)."

Here let us leave Defoe for this while; in the new sunshine of favour and appreciation that was bursting upon him when his prospects seemed the gloomiest.

LONG HAIR AND SHORT.

ST. PAUL held that it was a shame to a man to wear his hair long, and he tells the Corinthians so in his first epistle to them. On the other hand, Huchius, patriarch of Jerusalem, A.D. 600, declared the outward visible signs of manly perfection to consist in an ample beard and in hair flowing down the shoulders.

In remote ages, the Persians, who now have their heads shaved, were hairy. Darius had a most luxuriant poll, and Alexander, who conquered him, probably paid few visits to the haircutter's in the course of his life. Alcibiades and his clique of roués introduced the effeminate fashion of long hair into Greece. Before their time the Athenians were *roundheads*, and it is fair to suppose that Aristides the Just, who did not pride himself above measure on his devotion to the Graces, sported a crop of bristles and ignored a comb. Herodotus relates that in token of mourning, the Persians were wont to cut off not only their own hair, but the manes of their horses. The same historian tells us that the Argians, being defeated by the Lacedæmonians, made a sacrifice of their locks, and vowed that they would remain shorn as long as they had not reconquered Thyrea. At Sparta, Lycurgus had decreed the wearing of long hair; but this law, to which Plutarch alludes, was never much obeyed. The Spartans when they attained their sixteenth year did as the young Athenians, and burned their hair upon the altar of either Diana or Mars. The fact is, all the

barbarians who used to come from across the seas in those times wore flowing locks, and the Greeks had no wish to resemble them.

Our primitive ancestors, the Britons, and like them the Gauls, allowed their hair to grow undisturbed. It often reached below the waist, and men like Caractacus must have looked curiosities. Conquered by the Romans, the Gauls and Britons were ignominiously clipped. In his enumeration of the Gallic tribes led into captivity by Cæsar, Lucian speaks of the Liguses "now shorn but erewhile possessed of an abundant mass of hair." Those of the Gauls who obtained their liberation hastened to let their hair grow again; in order the more to mark the importance they attached to flowing locks, they took to shaving their slaves. It is thus that Ausonius speaks of four young boys and four young girls, all shorn, as being a customary present to a rich Gaul on his wedding-day. At the beginning of the fifth century Pharamond established his kingdom in the province which thenceforth took the name of France. The Gauls were reduced to a state of bondage, and the conquerors laid ruthless scissors upon their victims' polls. From this time it became a generally understood thing all over Europe that long hair was the exclusive appanage of the great and noble. Not only serfs, but free peasants and burgesses, were forbidden to go about otherwise than cropped. The glebe slaves on a nobleman's estate were even (during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries) shorn altogether; and it is from this custom that the practice of saluting by taking off the hat arose. The act of uncovering the head amounted to saying: "See, sir; I am your servant; I have no hair."

When a nobleman was convicted of any felonious offence, the razor was invariably applied to his pate. Clotaire the First, King of France, caused his own son, Gondebaud, to be shorn for conspiring against him. And by way of adding to the disgrace of this sentence, he immediately afterwards issued an edict condemning to the severest penalties any one who should by stealth or violence cut off the hair of an honest man.

When the harsh ferocity of the early Gothic times had a little subsided, and when Christianity had introduced a few humane notions into the minds of men, certain plebeians began to murmur at the obligation of wearing bristles. At that period the large majority of priests and church dignitaries were sprung from the people; the scholars, masters of schools, and public professors, were also "churls" or "knaves"—as it was the polite fashion to call them; and as for the lawyers, clerks, petty magistrates, and government secretaries, there was not one of them but was of base blood. Still, these base-blooded people formed the most intelligent part of the nation, and it was humiliating to them to have no hair, while jolter-headed boobies in armour, who could neither read nor write, were wearing matted locks all down their backs. God save the mark! But why did not these reflecting "knaves" push their reasoning a little further? Why did they not raise a cry against all other privileges, and so nip many injustices,

which have grown up rank for centuries? But, we suppose, there is a time for everything. The hair question assumed disquieting proportions in France, for in the year 1201, Pierre Lombard, Archbishop of Paris (whose own head left much to be desired in the matter of capillary adornment) was prevailed upon by the malcontents to become their champion. He was a learned and a good man. No doubt he had often pondered in the silence of the closet upon the unseemly appearance of his close-clipped crown, and he took up the cudgels like a man determined to win. The King of France at that time was the gallant Philip the Second, generally known as Philip Augustus. He was not by any means a monarch averse to progress, for he had already excited no little dissatisfaction amongst his subjects by insisting that they should wash. He had erected extensive bath houses, and the people had been politely requested to make use of them as one of the best preservatives against scurvy and fever, which then had hold upon all the working classes. Philip Augustus, after giving the matter his most attentive consideration, signed the Magna Charta of capillary liberty, at about the time when his royal compeer, John of England, was pulling a dismal face over the Charter of Runnymede. Generally speaking the English follow the French in the matter of personal adornment, but in this case we had been beforehand with our neighbours. So early as the reign of Henry the Second, our plebeian forefathers had obtained exemption from the obligation of having their hair cut, and they had obtained it without much ado.

As was natural, the repeal of the long-hair law caused immense dissatisfaction among the nobles. The chief hardship, they alleged, was, that it would be thenceforth impossible to discern a gentleman from a boor at a hundred yards off; and they vented their spleen upon Pierre Lombard by prosecuting him before the ecclesiastical court of Paris for a work of his entitled *Les Sentences*, a theological treatise which his enemies affirmed to be heretical. The book was pronounced subversive, and was burned by the hands of the hangman. Pierre Lombard did not resign his see in consequence, but he died soon after, broken-hearted by persecution, and wishing, very likely, that he had allowed the hair of his countrymen to remain cut close in bristles, without interference.

We hear nothing more about short hair until the sixteenth century. From the time of Philip Augustus to that of Francis the First, every one, lord or bumpkin, let his hair fall down his back. Historians and chroniclers speak a great deal about the oils and ointments that were used by the wealthy and noble of the middle ages; and it appears to have been a pretty prevalent custom to powder one's locks with gold-dust.

Frequenter of picture-galleries must have observed that all portraits of French noblemen during the mediæval times, and up to the year 1530, represent men with abundant locks, but that from the year 1530 there is an abrupt

change: the hair of Frenchmen becoming, from that date, as short as that of a modern jail-bird. The reason of this is as follows: His Majesty Francis the First, happening to spend the Christmas of 1529 at Fontainebleau, organised a series of routs and revels, in honour of the new year. On the sixth of January, it used to be customary for the mummers to elect a king, and engage in a mimic war against a rival party, who would pretend to dethrone the mock monarch. Francis, hearing that the lord of a neighbouring castle had been elected "king" by some friends of his, disguised himself, and went with a party of twenty courtiers to offer battle to the revelers. The challenge was accepted. A fort was erected in the great hall of the castle, and Francis endeavoured to carry it by storm. It was usual to fight with eggs in guise of shot, and bags of flour in lieu of maces; but after a while the strife waxed hot, and somebody threw a lighted brand, which fell upon the disguised king's head and felled him senseless. The wound was a very serious one. For some time Francis remained in bed, and when he made his reappearance amidst his court, his hair was cropped quite close: while his beard, on the contrary, which he had always up to that time shaved off, had been suffered to grow luxuriantly. Imitation being the sincerest flattery, the courtiers hurried off to put themselves into the haircutter's hands. Gradually the people followed the example. Hair became short, and beards lengthened. From France, the fashion passed into England and other countries. It lasted for nearly a hundred years.

As every one knows, long hair and short hair had a marked political significance during the wars of Charles the First against his parliament. It was no joke, then, to be caught with bristles in Prince Rupert's camp; and to have come with curling locks under Cromwell's eye would have been to run the risk of being sent, not to the hair, but to the head, cutter's. Charles the Second brought back the fashion of long cavalier locks, but these were soon superseded by the towering wigs introduced by Louis the Fourteenth. He had a very poor head of hair; thin, lank, and of a dirty buff colour; and his barber devised a most voluminous peruke to meet the emergency. Of course the fashion "took," and this big unsightly headdress, which must have been insupportable in summer, remained in use until the middle of Louis the Fifteenth's reign, when it gave way to the famous powdered wig.

The great Republic swept away the wigs, and many of the heads that were in them. It was then that the pigtail fashion came in, both for high and low, and lasted long enough to be remembered by some men of the present day. Napoleon the First mercilessly cut off the pig-tails of his republican soldiers, and nearly caused a mutiny among the army of Egypt by so doing. Similarly, immense discontent was excited in the British Navy when the Admiralty abolished the pigtail some half century ago. So we come down to the present times, when we gratify our individual tastes in the matter of

our heads of hair and our beards, unless indeed we are private soldiers, or paupers, or convicts, or are put into a reformatory; when, for the general good, we must yield to sanitary cropping laws.

LITTLE WITCH AND THE MISERS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

ONE day Witch was busy making the soup for the dinner. She was covered to the chin in a large apron, and her sleeves were rolled up to her shoulders. She wielded a wooden spoon in stirring the pot, and chopped vegetables as she was accustomed; but the little maid was in an unusual state of anxiety. Her cheeks were hot, and her heart was thumping under her checked apron. The matter that troubled her was also unusual. Barry had invited her to breakfast with his mother. Witch was longing to go, but did not know how to ask permission to absent herself from home. In her distress she ventured to appeal to Kathleen, who came down to the kitchen with a tattered novel in her hand, to warm her feet, and to taste the soup.

Now Kathleen was not an ill-natured person. She knew that she was a large, selfish, useless young woman, and, in the abstract, she could have wished to be different. She secretly admired Witch's energy and industry, and often wished that there were servants to do the work of the house in her stead. Thinking thus she felt herself to be a most affectionate sister. She had once got up an hour earlier in the morning with the intention of helping Witch to arrange the breakfast-table, but, having so much unusual time on her hands, had been lured by her vanity into mazes of elaborate hair-dressing, from which she could not satisfactorily extricate herself till the breakfast was nearly over. This was now some months ago, and she had just been feeling that it was time to make another effort to assist Witch. So that Witch got a favourable hearing while Kathleen performed the duty of tasting the soup.

And Kathleen went to Barbara, the eldest sister, who had no taste for being a mother, and found her making paper flowers to wear in her bonnet, and laid little Witch's request before her.

"If they had even been rich and respectable people!" said Barbara. "But low acquaintances whom she has picked up by chance—for all the world like a servant maid!"

"Very like a servant maid," said Kathleen, remorsefully.

"Don't take me up in that manner," said Barbara. "I am your elder sister, and it is very disrespectful. Pray, who will make my toast? and you know that I cannot eat my breakfast without it."

"I will do it," said Kathleen, magnanimously; and, not to be outdone in generosity, Barbara consented to exist without Witch for a whole summer morning till ten o'clock.

The young poet and his mother lived in a strange old corner of Dublin called Weavers'-square. It is all paved with stones in the middle, quite shut in from the world, and the houses are queer and ancient, with their fronts rising up and narrowing to a peak, as if they had been originally intended for gables, and the builder had changed his mind. Up a winding stair went Witch, and into the presence of Barry's mother.

One of the small deep-set windows lay open, and a sweet-looking old woman sat beside it in a rude arm-chair. She was sorting a variety of coloured silks in her lap, though her eyes were closed, for she was blind. But she had learned to know the colours by her touch. A coarse brown pitcher, crammed full of blooming hawthorn, was on the sill beside her; and the scanty white curtain was drawn aside and the fresh air coming in.

Never before had Witch been in possession of three whole hours to be expended in idleness with her friends. As she took her seat at the frugal breakfast-table, she gazed in delight through her rose-coloured spectacles at the weaver's poverty-stricken home. The room had a dark sloping roof and crooked walls. The most important article of furniture was the heavy loom, at which Barry must work night and day. Upon it was stretched the unfinished cloth, and a little ledge held some paper, an ink-horn, and pen. Here were written the poems which were so beautiful to Witch, and which, later, the whole world was to extol. The sun was shining on Witch's brilliant kerchief, which she wore upon her shoulders in honour of the occasion. And the mother, who could not see, had been told of this, and of how bravely the colours sparkled, and of how fire flashed out of the gold.

"My dear," she said, "you would prize it indeed if you knew how my boy worked three nights without sleep to finish it. And it is a rare little garment with a wonderful story. Barry, have you told her the story?"

"No," said Barry; "not without your permission."

"We will tell her the first part," said the mother; "never mind the second; we need not spoil our morning."

"Well, my dear, the Sultan of the East had a beautiful Sultana, and the Sultana had a favourite bird, which was a paroquet. And the paroquet would perch on the shoulder of the Sultana, making so lovely a picture, that the Sultan's delight knew no bounds. The bird's brilliant plumage mingled with the lady's raven hair. The Sultan had the eye of a painter. This living picture caused him rapture.

"But the Sultana was haughty and wilful, and she did not choose to be kept sitting with a bird on her shoulder. Her love for the creature changed to hate. She secretly gave it poison, and it died.

"The Sultan was so afflicted at the death of the poor bird, that his temper became intolerable, and the Sultana had good cause to repent her cruel deed. She bethought her of how she might repair the loss. She employed a skilful artist to design for her a kerchief, from which should shine forth all the colours of the plumage of the bird; these to be enhanced by a mixture of gold and silver, and jewels to be sewn upon the fringe. She wore the kerchief. The Sultan was enchanted by her sympathy and affection, and his temper became at once less unbearable. The harmony and brilliance of the colours in the web were more splendid than the presence of the bird. The Sultana was charmed with her success, and henceforth never appeared before the Sultan without taking care to have the kerchief on her shoulders.

"Things went on very well for a time after this, till one of the Sultana's women began to covet the curious garment of which her mistress was so fond. Her desire became strong, and the kerchief disappeared.

"Then there arose a storm in the palace. The Sultana flew to the Sultan. The Sultan pronounced sentence of death on that person with whom the kerchief should be found. A search commenced, and the terrified thief flew from hiding-place to hiding-place with her prize. A traveller with sacks upon a mule came tramping past the gates of the palace. The woman ran to meet him, and thrust the dangerous kerchief into one of his sacks. The man thought her mad, and passed on, congratulating himself upon his luck. 'I shall sell it,' he thought, 'for a good price.' But a gossip on the road soon enlightened him as to the story of the kerchief. 'I shall be caught,' he now said, 'and put to death as

the thief!' Arrived at the nearest town, he rushed into the first door he saw open. A young girl was coming out. The traveller threw the kerchief over her face, and ran away. When the girl drew the kerchief from her eyes, he had disappeared.

"Now this young girl had not yet heard the story of the kerchief, and was delighted with the present which the strange man had brought her. She put the kerchief on her head, and looked out of the window. Very soon there arose a tumult in the street. Here, then, was the thief, and she was doomed. It was useless for her to tell how she came by the kerchief. She had been seen with the Sultana's precious garment on her head, and she must die.

"She had friends, however, and in terror and with difficulty she escaped out of the country. In the course of a few years she made her way to France. She was an intelligent young woman, and comely, though copper-coloured, and with a ring in her nose. That ring used to awe me very much; for she was my nurse. My mother happened to meet with her while travelling through France, and engaged her as an attendant on her children. Her strange story was a delight to my childhood. A sight of the Sultana's kerchief was her reward for my good conduct. She loved me very dearly, as I loved her. The kerchief was her one curiosity and treasure, and she gave it to me when I— parted from my family," said the mother, sadly. "She gave it with her blessing, and foretold that it would bring me good fortune. I could not part with it, my dear, even after all these years. But Barry has copied it for you. And I know by the touch that he has copied it right well."

When Witch went home that day, stepping on tiptoe with happiness, she perceived that all the dingy shutters were shut in the next house; which gave her a great shock. She had been humming a song of Barry's, to which she had set a little tune of her own; but she stopped short and her voice was heard no more. "This must be death," thought little Witch. "Nothing else can it be!"

"I am sure I don't wonder at it," said Barbara. "I expected that some of them must have been starved long ago."

Alice now remembered that she had heard a great noise going on next door during the night, and Kathleen secretly determined to have a little private conversation with the charwoman. This she ingeniously arranged, and the truth was ascertained. The Brother Scarecrow was

dead. He had been found dead in that corner of the garden where he was accustomed to stare into the mould. He had been carried into the house by the two poor old sisters, where he now lay waiting for the undertaker.

"How terribly lonely and wretched they must be," thought little Witch, with a sigh from the very bottom of her pitiful heart. And then the strangest idea came into her mind, and she shivered and crept a little nearer to the fire. But the idea remained, and its presence in her mind made her start whenever Barbara looked at her. It would not go away, and when the sisters were all in bed, and she had slacked the kitchen fire, she sat down upon the stairs with her candle in her hand, and thought about the two miserable old women sitting lonely with their dead. And the fantastic picture which had been hovering before her eyes all the evening was there now more plainly than ever. It was a picture of herself, Witch, knocking at the hall door of the next house, walking down an unknown hall and up a strange staircase, and sitting in a dreary death-room between those frightful old ladies. It was a horrible picture, Witch thought, yet fascinating, for her heart was bleeding for the sufferers.

At last she went to bed, but it was useless her trying to sleep, and after half an hour she got up. "What on earth will Barbara say?" she said, shivering as she dressed herself. She wrapped her cloak around her, and took the latch key. Very soon she had closed her own door softly, and was standing trembling before the next.

"Dump! dump!" said the muffled knocker; but Witch's heart seemed to make more noise.

It seemed almost a year before there was any response to that timid appeal of Witch. At last a dismal ray appeared glimmering down the darkness of the staircase. A chain and many bolts were withdrawn, and Witch stood face to face with Miss Tabitha.

"From the undertakers?" asked Miss Tabitha, scowling forth.

"No," said little Witch, timidly.

"Who then?" said Miss Tabitha, a note of alarm in her gruff voice.

"I am only the little girl from next door," said Witch; "and please, madam, I thought you might like some one to be useful, to sit up at night, or to make a cup of tea, or—or anything like that——" stammered trembling Witch.

"No!" shrieked Miss Tabitha, growing larger and more dreadful with horror, "nothing like that do we want. Nothing

in the least like that. Go off—at once—or I shall call the police!" Her eyes glared, she extended her arms before the door to keep Witch out. Suddenly she slammed the door in her face, and refastened all the chains and bars.

"What has happened?" asked Miss Seraphina, coming down-stairs with red rings round her withered eyes.

"Thieves!" groaned Miss Tabitha, who was rolling herself against the wall in a convulsion of fear.

"What?" shrieked Seraphina, "a gang of robbers?"

"Worse!" said Tabitha. "We shall be torn to pieces. They will leave us without a farthing to bury us!"

"Will they beat in the door?" said Seraphina, shuddering.

"She might do anything after daring to knock and ask for admittance," growled Tabitha; "but she will be more likely to take cunning means, steal over the garden wall, or come down the chimney."

"She!—who?" asked Miss Seraphina.

"Who! why the girl from the next house," barked Tabitha.

"The little girl with the kerchief!" murmured Miss Seraphina, and a dazzling, dancing, beautiful vision came suddenly hovering before her aching, half-blind eyes.

"Coming to make tea for us!" groaned Tabitha. "Who told her that we could afford to drink tea? She will break in yet, and eat us out of house and home. Poor old creatures who live in daily danger of starvation! And we shall be left without a farthing. I will go and I will watch; I will not leave the spot. There, you guard the hall door while I watch in the garden. They shall not make us paupers. They shall not——"

She had now groped her way to the back door. She was outside among the dank weeds and grass in the garden. The moon had risen, warm, and yellow, and round, above some ragged gables, and a lank, evil-looking tree, was slowly waving a stealthy arm. Here was a dark creeping body moving upon the wall against the sky. This must certainly be a robber climbing the wall. Miss Tabitha threw up her arms, tottered, gasped, and dropped down in a fit.

But little Witch had crept back to her bed, and, having done what she could, was now fast asleep.

When the undertaker arrived at the misers' dwelling he was asked to provide two coffins. Forlorn Miss Seraphina sat by her dead, the last of three who had clung together here for forty years in

hunger and madness; keeping guard over the secret which was buried in their garden.

"Oh, that any one would stay with me!" said the lonely old woman. "I shall die of fear and grief!" And she besought the charwoman who had been helping her not to leave the house. But the charwoman was obliged to go.

So Seraphina was left alone. The closed shutters and the fastened doors shut her out from the summer world, even such as it was in the street. That clump of trees against the distant horizon was as far from her vision as if it had been ten thousand miles away. The sun streamed in through the cracks of the dilapidated shutters, and ventured a little way along the floor to smile at that miserable living creature, so old and so ugly and so utterly forlorn, who sat watching beside two coffins. And it was worse when evening came, and the children of the neighbourhood, who had been at school all day, came out to romp and sing under the window; but worse still when supper time had called them home, and the street was deserted, and the night was growing darker and more silent every moment.

"I shall go quite mad!" said Seraphina, striking her poor breast in despair.

"Oh, little girl!—little girl next door!" moaned she. "Would that you would come knocking to this house again!"

Just then little Witch was getting her house put in order for the night, and her sisters put to bed. Whether some echo of that cry reached her through the wall, I will not say; but certain it is that no sooner was she alone in her own room than she began to pray for the one solitary old woman now alone in the neighbouring house, and to think of her even more pitifully than she had thought when there had been two. It appeared that there was a fascination about those poor old ugly neighbours, living and dead; for Witch could not settle to take her rest.

"Little girl! little girl!" moaned Seraphina at the other side of the wall.

"Oh, poor old woman!" sighed Witch, who, nevertheless, of course, could not hear her. And at last little Witch, being very tired, fell asleep, and desolate Seraphina sat alone through the long night, almost crazed with fear and despair.

When Witch went out to the garden next morning, she saw Seraphina's poor gnome-like face looking wistfully down on her from the lobby window.

"It is awful to think of anything human

being so ugly," thought Witch; but still she went on pitying the poor neighbour.

Looking up again she imagined that the old woman stretched her arms towards her; and this remained upon her mind.

"That is not the one who turned me back," thought Witch; and then she went indoors, trembling. It was as if she had seen a goblin looking out of a haunted house.

At last the dreary night came round again, and Seraphina tottered about her miserable home, in and out of the blank empty rooms, and back again to the death-chamber. The companionship of that dead brother and sister was too dreadful. Having feared them in life she feared them more in death, and the rooms in which they were not seemed more terrible than the rooms in which they were. Presently, sitting in all her woe, Seraphina heard a gentle little knock come on the street door of her house.

Seraphina raised her head and listened.

Could it be a robber? Or could it be the little girl come in answer to her call?

The knock was repeated, and Seraphina took her rushlight in hand, and stumbled down the dark staircase to the hall.

"Who is it?" she called through the keyhole.

"I live next door, and my name is little Witch," was the answer. Whereupon Seraphina at once set down her rushlight, and withdrew the chain from the door.

"Come in, come in!" she said, holding her shaking hands towards the visitor, while tears and a human light came into her poor dreary eyes.

"I thought you might be lonely," said Witch, apologetically, "and that you might let me stay with you till morning."

"My dear, my dear!" cried the old woman, "how will you bear this dreadful house?" And then getting quite sick with joy at hearing so pleasant a young voice in her ears, she fainted in the hall at Witch's feet.

Witch was terrified, thinking she was dead. "I have killed her," she said to herself. But, after great efforts, she succeeded in restoring poor Seraphina's senses, and assisted her to an old settee in the dingy parlour, where she covered her with her own little cloak. Then she set about making a fire in the rusty parlour grate, where a fire had not been kindled for half a century. She stole back to her own house, and out of her scanty stores brought some tea, besides other matters not to be found

in the misers' household. And when Seraphina saw the bountiful little spirit making itself so busy for her comfort, she wept enough of tears to wash all the dryness out of her withered life. And when a savoury meal was set before her she ate it with great appetite, moaning all the time, and wondering that a judgment did not descend upon her greediness.

Witch remained all night, bearing the poor neighbour company, and early in the morning returned to her home and her household work. A scanty procession carried the two dead misers to the grave. And after this was over, and the evening had come round again, Witch went boldly up to Barbara, saying she wished to spend an hour with the lonely lady next door.

"You are a strange creature!" said Barbara; but she did not prevent her going. So Witch went and came, and Seraphina grew more human every day.

"My dear," she said once, "I am afraid of this house except when you are in it. But I dare not leave it, because of something that is in the garden. It is a curse which is upon me, and which I am obliged to bear." And then she drooped her poor face and groaned.

At other times she cried aloud, "Oh, I have such a secret, such a terrible secret! How could they go and leave me with it!"

And more than once Witch got a fit of frightened wonder about the secret. Could it be that a creature had been murdered, and was buried in the garden? But this idea was too dreadful to be harboured.

One bright autumn evening there came a whim into Witch's head, a whim for the amusement of Seraphina. She had just finished a very radiant little picture, and she had got some brilliant wild flowers which Barry had plucked for her in the wood that morning. She made a little nosegay, and she took the picture under her arm, and put the paroquet kerchief in her pocket. Here were three treasures which she had brought for Seraphina's amusement. She first presented her flowers to the delighted old woman, who snuffed them eagerly, holding them off, holding them near, and trembling all the time.

"Time was when I gathered flowers," quavered she.

Then Witch exhibited her picture. It was a group of young girls sitting on a mossy wall, with an orchard in full bloom behind them. At this sight the old woman most strangely began to weep.

"It is my old home," she said; "my

home of long ago. And there am I, and there are my sisters. Ah, before the money arrived from India. There is Margaret's fair face, as I live; and, my dear, Tabitha and I were not then so ugly as we afterwards became. There was a little green lane at the other side of that wall, and people used to go up and down on summer evenings. My child, you have brought me a picture of my youth, and it is only cruelty now."

Little Witch stood aghast. She had composed this picture from a tender description given by Barry's mother of the home of her childhood. And wonderingly she remembered that Margaret was that poor mother's name. She had painted that sweet face pointed out by Seraphina from her fancy of what that blind mother must have been in her youth. Now here was a curious coincidence. And it seemed that she had brought trouble instead of pleasure. But she remembered the kerchief, and triumphantly pulled it from her pocket.

"See," she said, flinging it over her shoulders; "does it not shine splendidly? Ah, if you could but see it in the sun!"

Seraphina screamed, and laid hold of Witch's skirts.

"Then I was not deceived when I saw you with it before from the window," she said. "Oh, it is the paroquet, the paroquet!" feeling it all over. "Girl, where did you get this thing?"

"I got it from Barry," said Witch, now truly in dismay.

"Who is Barry?" gasped Seraphina.

"His mother and he are my dearest friends," said Witch. "He wove this for me on his loom."

"No; he must have stolen it!" said Seraphina, in great excitement. "There was only one kerchief like this in the world. With a wonderful story. Oh, such a wonderful story!"

"I know the story," said Witch, nodding.

"You know the story?" shrieked Seraphina.

"Yes," said Witch, "about the bird and the Sultana. But this is not that one. This is copied from it. Barry's mother has the original and would not part with it for the world."

"Where did she get it?" moaned Seraphina. "Oh, where did she get it? The bird and the Sultana. Yes, that was part of the story. But the rest of it, do you know the rest of it?"

"No," said Witch; but she remembered that there had been a sequel to the blind mother's story.

"Then I will tell it to you," said Seraphina. "The kerchief was stolen, and handed from one to another till it came into the possession of a nurse in our family."

"In your family?" interrupted Witch.

"Yes," said Seraphina; "we had servants enough, and pleasures and comforts. We were not wretched creatures then. We lived in a beautiful country. Your picture is a morsel of our home. We were as happy as young creatures could be. The only vexation we had as children was the quarrelling of Tabitha and Roger about which would save up the most cherry-stones or halfpence in a drawer. Our nurse often scolded them for that, and told of how there had been misers in our family once; and bade them take care lest an evil spirit should get into them. Our mother was dead, and she was a mother to little Margaret, who was by many years the youngest of us all. She loved little Margaret as well as her own life."

"At last there came a great fortune from India, and Tabitha and Roger became miserable. After this they could not endure the spending of a halfpenny. Little Margaret was just then grown up, and as sweet, oh as sweet as the face in your picture. Home became terrible by-and-by, and poor Margaret ran away from it and made a sad marriage. She came back once begging a little help for her sick husband and children. But they would not give her a penny. Our old nurse was dying at that time, but she got up on her feet to curse Tabitha and Roger. She was folding and pinning the paroquet kerchief—the only gift she had to give—upon Margaret's bosom with her dying hands at the same time that she was uttering her curse. It withered me up for evermore, that curse did. And it seemed to pass into the colours of that paroquet kerchief, and they seemed to burn and burn with it. That is why it is so dreadful to me now. I heard that Margaret and her husband and children all died. I never could go to seek them, for I never had any money. And oh, what a life I have had, all along!" moaned Seraphina, "till it has ended like this, through the money and the curse!"

"I tell you what it is, Miss Seraphina," said Witch, promptly. "My friend Barry is your nephew, and his mother is your sister Margaret!"

"You would not make a fool of a poor, old, lonely wretch?" said Seraphina, with a wistful look in Witch's face.

"Come and see," said Witch.

"Stay," said Seraphina; "are they poor? I hope they are poor, for there is such a heap of money in the garden!"

A bright light dawned before Witch. Barry's good fortune shone out upon her. And she and Seraphina made their way to Weavers'-square.

"Sister Margaret! Sister Margaret!" cried Seraphina, "will you come and take the curse off that Indian money? It is all buried in the earth for your son. Let him go and dig it up!"

Some time afterwards, a busy, active old lady might have been seen stepping briskly about a handsome country house. There were the gardens to be put in order, and Margaret's pretty rooms to be furnished. Seraphina arranged it all, for the young people were away on their wedding tour. The sweep and the milkman out of a certain dreary street could hardly have recognised this old lady, if they had seen her.

The world has got Barry's name on the tip of its busy tongue. Little Witch is a great lady, and paints pictures of foreign lands. She does not forget her kitchen, nor her paroquet kerchief. How do they get on at home? she will often wonder.

Oh dear! oh dear! Kathleen has to make the tea, I am afraid. Alice has to mend the broken stockings. Bella has to dust the little tambourine-girl on the chimney-piece! True, there is now a servant, with arms much stronger than Witch's ever were. But yet there is such a great deal to be done, after all. Why did little Witch go away?

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